

Mr. TANCREDI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I recognized when I brought this measure forward that would provide an opportunity for our friends on the other side to discuss a variety of other issues not really attendant to this particular problem, not attendant to this particular bill.

We can spend all of our time, and I know that, in debate on the myriad of issues that have been hashed and rehashed on this floor, debated, discussed, or raked over, but in fact we are talking about something here that is a very practical step that can be taken tomorrow.

It does not need the overwhelming support of the Congress from a financial standpoint, it just simply needs to be passed into law and allowed to be implemented by the Secretary of Education, and we will have done something significant. It is meaningful. These are not just whimsical attempts to try to deal with this problem. Over 600 calls have come in in 1 year, a little over 1 year. Eighty of those calls were of a threatening nature.

□ 1430

We do not know, because the system does not require a feedback, as to what kind of action was finally taken after the CBA sends the information to the local agency. But, anecdotally, we have heard that there have been three to four arrests that have been made as a result of the hotline; and, therefore, we can only speculate as to the possibility as to the number of people whose lives have either been saved or at least kept out of harm's way as a result of this. So we can do this. We should think positively about the steps we can take in this regard.

I urge us to focus our attention on this issue and not on the many other things that I know are deep and deeply felt. I totally understand my colleagues who do get emotional about this issue. It is definitely an emotional issue. Perhaps the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL) and I share more than just an inclination of that because, being both Italians here, one can understand how we can both get emotional about this.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER), my colleague on the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

(Mr. ROEMER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, I would, first of all, like to thank the gentleman from New York for the time that she has given me to speak on such an important topic and commend her for her strong leadership on the committee that we serve on together.

I would like to extend a bipartisan hand to my colleague on the other side of the aisle who also serves on the

Committee on Education and the Workforce for his common sense, his bipartisanship, and his responsiveness to a need in America, which is important to establish a safety hotline for our parents and our schools.

But just as we need this safety hotline because of violence programs in our schools, we also need more. We need a lifeline to many of our students in our schools across this great country who do not have a chance to get a good education.

Just as we have brought this bipartisan and responsive and common sense legislation to the floor tonight, it is a very small step, a drop in the bucket towards solving some of the education problems in America, we need to do more.

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. DAVIS) and I have a bill to try innovative and bold and new ways to respond to the need in this country to bring more teachers into the teaching profession. Where is that bill today? This would bring people into the teaching profession at 40 or 50 years old in technology and math and science areas when too many of our teachers are overwhelmed with problems in the schools; and they are teaching, with a physical education degree, physics. They are not certified in the area. So we need to do more.

We need to do more in Head Start, making our Head Start programs more responsive to the needs of learning children earlier and at earlier ages. We need more resources for those children. Where is that bill today?

We need to do more to help some of our working families in the middle class and low income to afford the cost of college or community school. But we do not have that bill today.

We do not have the Elementary and Secondary Education Act on the floor today, although that will probably expire soon. We need more charter schools and public choice in America today. Where is that bill today?

Now, I am all for establishing a hotline to help our parents and our children and help establish safer schools, but what about the lifeline? In America today, across the country, from Colorado to Indiana to New York, education is the most important and pressing concern on the minds of our parents. Yet, oftentimes we cannot muster the needed, the required bipartisanship and common sense and responsiveness to bring some of these other bills to the floor.

I hope we do it before this session ends. I hope we can work on charter schools and public choice. I hope we can work on new ideas to bring new teachers into the profession. I hope we can work on better quality ideas for our parents to be involved in our schools and for local control. I hope that we can work on the ideas of, sometimes in our cities, schools that are literally falling down on the heads of our children.

Let us work together in this Congress on these ideas and not just on the idea,

although it is a good one, of outlines for our parents, for safe schools.

Mr. TANCREDI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

Mr. Speaker, if we are going to get into all of the things that have not been on the floor that are not on the floor, it is, I guess, important for us to talk about what has happened so far.

April 29, 1999, the Educational Flexibility Act, H.R. 800, was signed into law; May 4, 1999, IDEA Full Funding resolution passed the House; July 10, the Teacher Empowerment Act. October 12, Dollars to the Classroom resolution passed the House; October 21, Student's Results Act. October 21, the Academic Achievement Act (Straight A's) passed the House. February 29, Literacy Involves Families Together Act passed the committee. April 13, the committee completed consideration of Education Options Act. May 3, IDEA Full Funding bill passed the House.

There have been actions taken. Again, speaking about these things in a vacuum makes it appear as though this is the only thing that we are doing. It is certainly not the case with education.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER).

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from New York once again for her kindness and generosity. I just respond to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDI) by saying this: The first bill that he mentioned, the Education Flexibility Act, was a bill that I authored with the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE), a Republican; and we worked across the aisle to pass that bill. It was signed into law by the President. It was one of the few that the gentleman from Colorado mentioned that has been signed into law.

It is one thing to be able to say we passed this in this body, it is another thing to be able to say we mustered the bipartisanship in the Senate or we were able to persuade or convince the President to be with us on the issue; and generally he is with us on many of these education issues.

The gentleman from Colorado mentioned a host of resolutions that do not have the force of law. The gentleman mentioned the TEA act, the Teacher Empowerment Act, that tries to provide more opportunities for our teachers to get into the teaching profession in new ways. I supported that piece of legislation. That is not law. ESCA, no where to be found today. Elementary and Secondary Education Act that is so vital where, we worked very well together for about a third of that act in a bipartisan way, and then bipartisanship somehow mysteriously fell apart.

So we have a long way to go. My point to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDI) is, one, to congratulate him for a bipartisan piece of legislation today, and, secondly, and I think he would admit, we need to do more.

The challenges in America today were succinctly put forward by Thomas